

§ 62-133.10. Retention of fuel and fuel-related cost savings associated with the purchase or construction of a carbon offset facility.

(a) The Commission shall permit an electric public utility that purchases or constructs a carbon offset facility to adjust its fuel and fuel-related costs in G.S. 62-133.2 to retain the North Carolina retail allocation of the system fuel and fuel-related cost savings resulting from the purchase or construction of the facility, not to exceed the annual revenue requirement associated with the allocated North Carolina retail portion of the facility as determined using the cost of service methodology approved by the Commission in the utility's last general rate case.

(b) For purposes of this section, "carbon offset facility" means a facility in this State that meets all of the following:

- (1) The facility is purchased or constructed by an electric public utility between July 1, 2009, and July 1, 2014.
- (2) The facility uses solar electric, solar thermal, wind, hydropower, geothermal, or ocean current or wave energy to generate electricity or equivalent BTUs.
- (3) The electricity or equivalent BTUs produced by the facility will displace electric generation so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from existing fossil fuel fired generating facilities used by the utility to meet the electricity needs of its North Carolina customers.

(c) An electric public utility seeking the adjustment authorized by this section first shall file with the Commission a petition requesting a determination that the facility the utility proposes to purchase or construct is a carbon offset facility. The utility shall include in its petition all of the following information in such form and detail as the Commission may require:

- (1) Description and location of the facility.
- (2) The benefit of the facility.
- (3) A list of all necessary permitting and approvals and their status.
- (4) Purchase or construction schedule, with in-service or completion date.
- (5) Projected costs to purchase or construct and the annual revenue requirement for the facility.
- (6) Projected annual generation output of the facility and information detailing how the generation projections were calculated.
- (7) Information demonstrating that the operation of the facility will displace electric generation resulting in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from existing fossil fuel fired facilities used by the utility to meet the electricity needs of its North Carolina customers.
- (8) The projected fuel and fuel-related cost savings the utility seeks to retain and how the savings were calculated.

(d) Upon the filing of the petition, the Public Staff shall conduct an investigation and shall file a report with the Commission setting forth the results of its investigation and stating whether the facility is a carbon offset facility. The Public Staff's report shall be filed not later than 45 days after the date the petition was filed, unless the Commission grants an extension of time not to exceed 15 days for good cause shown. Other interested persons may file comments in response to the utility's petition and the Public Staff's report not later than 15 days after the Public Staff files its report. The Commission shall enter an order either granting or denying the petition not later than 105 days after the date the petition was filed. A finding by the Commission that the facility is a carbon offset facility shall establish that the utility's decision to purchase or construct the facility is reasonable and prudent.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to exempt an electric public utility from obtaining all applicable permits and certificates, including a certificate of public convenience and necessity required by G.S. 62-110.1. An electric public utility shall file annual cost and schedule updates with the Commission until the purchase or construction of an approved carbon offset facility is completed.

(f) Upon placement into service of an approved carbon offset facility, the electric public utility shall, in addition to the information and data provided under G.S. 62-133.2, submit the following in conjunction with its application for a fuel and fuel-related charge adjustment:

- (1) A calculation of the annual revenue requirement associated with the carbon offset facility.
- (2) Information demonstrating the specific items of costs associated with the carbon offset facility's annual revenue requirement are reasonable and prudent.
- (3) The fuel and fuel-related cost savings resulting from operation of the carbon offset facility.
- (4) Actual generation output of the carbon offset facility, including a demonstration and quantification of how this generation displaced electric generation resulting in reduced greenhouse gas emissions from existing fossil fuel fired facilities used by the utility to meet the electricity needs of its North Carolina customers during the test year.

(g) The Commission shall approve an estimate of the projected fuel and fuel-related cost savings and an annual revenue requirement for an approved facility, as appropriate, in each G.S. 62-133.2 proceeding. The Commission also may approve a true-up procedure for the projected fuel and fuel-related cost savings. In the first G.S. 62-133.2 proceeding conducted after the approved facility is placed in service, the Commission shall determine the reasonable and prudent cost of the facility for ratemaking purposes. The revenue requirement associated with the facility shall include but not be limited to: depreciation; operating and maintenance costs; applicable taxes; and a return on investment, net of accumulated depreciation, accumulated deferred income taxes, and other applicable savings or adjustments. The rate of return on investment shall be based on the then current capital structure, embedded cost of preferred stock, and embedded cost of debt of the public utility net of appropriate income taxes, and the cost of common equity approved in the public utility's then most recent general rate case.

(h) The Commission shall authorize the electric public utility to utilize deferral accounting for the fuel and fuel-related cost savings realized in conjunction with the operation of an approved facility. The Commission shall, by rule or order, approve the terms and conditions of the deferral accounting.

(i) The annual revenue requirement of the approved facility in excess of the annual fuel and fuel-related cost savings shall be deemed recovered through the utility's then current base rates.

(j) The adjustment authorized by this section shall terminate upon the establishment of new rates in the electric public utility's next general rate case following the placement into service and inclusion into base rates of the approved facility. (2009-390, s. 2.)